



SMALLPOX

What is SMALLPOX?

Smallpox is a serious, contagious, and sometimes fatal virus. The disease was eliminated worldwide after a successful vaccination program. The last case of smallpox in the United States was in 1949.

Signs and Symptoms:

After being exposed, a person may have no symptoms for up to 7-17 days. After this, symptoms are similar to a bad flu with fever of 101° or higher, head and body aches, vomiting, and severe backache. This may last for 2-4 days.

Next, a rash begins on the face, hands, forearms, mouth and throat, and often the palms and soles. This then spreads to the legs and then to the trunk. The rash develops more on the arms and legs than on the chest area. The rash starts with flat, red lesions that become raised bumps. Then they become pus-filled blisters that crust, scab and fall off after nearly three weeks. Pitted, light-colored scars are frequently present after the scabs separate.

Transmission:

Person-to-person transmission occurs when the infected person coughs or sneezes droplets and another person inhales them. Smallpox can also be spread through direct contact with infected bodily fluids or objects, such as bedding or clothing. The person is considered infected until all scabs separate from the skin and fall off.

Treatment:

There is no specific treatment for smallpox. Some patients require hospital care to receive Intravenous (IV) fluids, medicine to control fever and pain, and to treat any complications from the disease.

Diagnosis:

Laboratory testing.

Prevention:

Vaccination is the only prevention for smallpox. For most people, smallpox vaccine is safe and effective. Smallpox vaccination has not been given routinely to the general public for many years. Should the disease occur again, vaccinations would be made available to the public.

What can you do?

Vaccination within 3-4 days of exposure offers protection for most individuals.

Whom do you call?

Delaware Division of Public Health: 1-888-295-5156

For more information:

Visit the CDC website:
www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/overview/disease-facts.asp

24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

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